

Hunger and malnutrition

†2614. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOODAND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the statistical information provided by the international food policy research institute on hunger and malnutrition position[†] in the country;
- (b) if so, whether Government have extended its consent to these statistics;
- (c) if so, the action plan Government are preparing to resolve this grim problem; and
- (d) if not, the action taken by Government to refute this report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOODAND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per information received from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), one of their institutes namely National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP) has come across International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) data. However, they do not agree with their estimates.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Empowering consumer groups for quality tests

2615. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRASEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOODAND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government are empowering consumer groups to test products for their quality and inform others;
- (b) if so, the steps taken in this direction;
- (c) whether Government are aware that active involvement of NGOs would enable consumers to acquire accurate information, about products instead of depending entirely on the advertisement put out by the manufacturers of such products;

[†]Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- (d) if so, the role of NGOs played so far; and
- (e) the future actions likely to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI TASLIMUDDIN): (a) and (b) Yes. To improve the quality and safety of the consumer products, the Department has started involving Voluntary Consumer Organisations, which had been undertaking testing of quality of consumer products. The Government has sanctioned funds to eligible VCOs for testing of products for their quality and safety, and for dissemination of information to the public.

(c) and (d) Yes. Voluntary Consumer Organisations doing comparative testing of products, publish their test reports enabling consumers to make an informed choice of product so that consumers can get full value of their money.

(e) The basic objective is to enlarge the scope of comparative product testing involving capable Voluntary Consumer Organisations.

Prevention from hunger and malnutrition

†2616. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of such persons in the country who are devoid of food;
- (b) whether faulty public distribution system is responsible for the deaths due to hunger and malnutrition;
- (c) whether Government are carrying out any amendments for inclusion of 'right of food' in the Constitution;
- (d) the efforts being made by Government to prevent starvation deaths; and
- (e) the schemes of investments in rural areas for preventing the same and the outcomes thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD)

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